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dialogue

The Staff Newsletter of the

Ministry of Community and Social Services



A new era in young offender services has begun in the eastern Ontario area with the opening of the William E. Hay Centre in Ottawa. This modern new complex replaces the former Ottawa Youth Detention Centre as a secure facility for young offenders in eastern Ontario. The facility includes three eight-bedroom residential units (each with its own living and dining room, kitchen, laundry, office and isolation areas), a gym, library and classrooms, as well as special safety and security features. In the photo, Wynn Turner, the Hay Centre's interim superintendent, tours an exercise room with Assistant Deputy Minister of Program Management Sue Herbert on opening day. See the story and another photo on page 3.

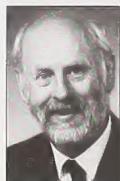
Thistletown review under way

Robert Couchman will head up the independent review of Thistletown Regional Centre and will complete a report during the summer.

In the meantime, no programs will change and no Thistletown staff will receive surplus notices.

Mr. Couchman is a former executive director of the Family Services Association of Metro Toronto and has many years of experience in the social services field. In 1993 and 1994 he was co-chair of the Canada Committee for the International Year of the Family. The appointment was announced April 21.

The review will examine a full range of options for the future of Thistletown. Mr. Couchman will study each



Robert Couchman

Thistletown program and will consider the needs of children and families, the capacity of the local community to meet these needs, the services and expertise required to meet these needs and the resources available for service provision.

Minister Tony Silipo announced the moratorium on plans to close Thistletown on April 11.

New OPSEU president from MCSS

A ministry employee is the first woman to head the 110,000-member Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU).

Leah Casselman, a correctional officer at the Syl Apps campus of Thistletown Regional Centre, was elected president of OPSEU on April 28 at the union's annual convention in Etobicoke.

Leah ran against three other candidates, including incumbent Fred Upshaw who led OPSEU for four years (two presidential terms).

Leah has a sociology degree from McMaster University and has been on

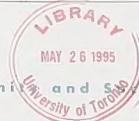


Leah Casselman

the OPSEU board since 1984; she has also chaired the Ministry Employee Relations Committee (MERC). She will take a leave of absence from the ministry while she is serving as full-time president of OPSEU.

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An excellent award for Elley



Photo: Doug Sutherland, CPRI

by Brenda Pilley, CPRI

An award for clinical excellence in the field of children's mental health services was established in 1989 in honour of Dr. Benjamin Goldberg, who served as the director of treatment, training and research at CPRI (Child and Parent Resource Institute) in London for more than 20 years.

This year's recipient is Elley Graham, acting director of resident care at CPRI. Elley exemplifies excellence both as a clinician and in the field of administration at CPRI, where she has worked for the past 18 years.

Shown in the photograph is Dr. Benjamin Goldberg, Elley Graham and Dr. Barb Richardson, chair of the Dr. Goldberg Award of Excellence Committee.

Adoption as an option for Crown wards

by Julia Naczynski

What are the chances of a child becoming available for adoption in Ontario? Very small, and steadily declining, a study of Crown wards has shown.

Of the Crown wards who are reviewed every year, only 2.7 per cent had a plan for adoption arranged for them in 1994. Children's aid societies — which take the responsibility for the care of Crown wards — were most likely to plan foster care as the future for their Crown wards: almost half (49 per cent) of Crown wards in 1994 went into foster care as part of their "permanent planning."

Compare this to 1991, when 7.5 per cent of Crown wards reviewed had a plan for care that made them available for adoption, while 42 per cent had a plan for permanent foster care.

It is ironic to have children in foster homes, when you consider the number of families so desperate to adopt a

child that they will travel to a foreign country and spend thousands of dollars trying to adopt overseas, commented Rich Partridge, co-ordinator of Crown ward review and of private and international adoptions.

Rich and program analyst Michael Batie were presenters at a wide-ranging discussion of Crown ward review and adoption as part of the four-day Adoption Resource Exchange (ARE). This ministry-sponsored event is held every spring and fall to help keep adoption workers at Ontario's 55 children's aid societies (CAs) up to date on changes in adoption, adoption disclosure and other child welfare issues.

Crown wards are children who have come into the care of a children's aid society, but about 80 per cent of those reviewed are not free to be adopted. (A "Crown ward review" is when ministry officials examine the care of a

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...Adoption as an option *continued from page 1*



Michael Batrie and Rich Partridge

child and, when needed, issue directives if the care does not comply with legislation.) In many cases, a judge's access order gives the birth parents the right to visit with the child, which means the child isn't free to be adopted. In only about 16 per cent of cases is there a "no access" order, which means that in only 16 per cent of cases can the child even be considered for adoption, said Rich.

In a statistical study of Crown wardship and access, Michael and Rich found that the average age of children at the time of Crown wardship is 7. Typically, a reviewed Crown ward has been in care for about five years, and in that five years he or she will live in three different homes. If a child is seven when he comes into care, he or she will likely spend 11 years — to the age of 18 — in the child welfare system, the statistical review pointed out.

Rich told the adoption workers that

he feels there is "untapped potential" for more Crown wards to become adoptable. He recommended that CAS consider earlier identification of children who might be good candidates for adoption.

While the birth family is usually the best option for the child most of the time, the older a child is upon coming into care, the more able he is to understand the situation and want to make decisions about his own future, Rich noted.

There has been a significant increase in the number of people who adopt overseas (international adoption). Michael and Rich noted. Often these children are older youngsters, or kids with special needs — the kind of children who are already available for adoption here, at much less personal expense and with the support that public children's aid societies can offer to adoptive parents.

• • • • •



Wendy Grace

A whacking good time was had by all at Huronia Regional Centre's annual week-long winter carnival. Activities during the February fun-fest included a dance, horse-drawn sleigh rides, and more, both indoors and out. The annual snow sculpture contest included re-creations of a number of cartoon characters such as Garfield the cat, Snoopy the dog and the biggest, yellowest Tweety Bird ever seen, which was created by the people from the Bayview Program Centre. Team competitions included toboggan, tricycle and three-legged races — and, seen in the photo, speed-hammering contests. Plaque for first prize in the team events went to the D1 Vocational Program Centre team, with captain Bob Longdon and members Scott Stevens, James Burch, Henry Jon, Tom Baker and Kim Johns.

More on Looks

PLAIN LANGUAGE PLEASE

Last month's column suggested ways of making your document easier to read by paying attention to its appearance. Here are more ways to arrange your documents that make them easy to follow and visually appealing.

- Put the most important information first. What is your message or theme? The answer to that question will help you decide what's important.
- Use headings and sub-headings. This helps organize information and makes it easier to find. A table of contents might be appropriate for a large document.
- Make sure the typeface you use is big enough — at least 12 points in size.

- Leave as much empty space as is practical; a page that's crammed with information is uninviting to read.

If you're producing a ministry document, the Communications and Marketing Branch can offer advice on improving its visual presentation. Contact the Dialogue editor, Julia Naczynski, for more information (see box on page 4 for phone and address).

Help for staff with family care

from the MCSS Employment Equity Office

If you have out-of-town training or special committee meetings, but find it difficult to participate because you can't leave a family member at home alone, the dependent care pilot project may be able to help.

In the past, you may have felt unable to attend out-of-town training or special committee meetings due to the costs of overnight care or supervision services of dependent family members. You may now be able to apply to the ministry for reimbursement of these costs.

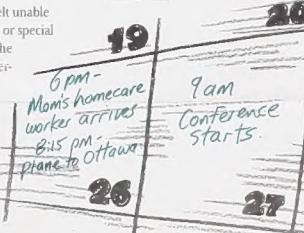
The ministry's Management Committee has approved the extension of the dependent care pilot project to March 31, 1996 based on the Employment Equity Office's project evaluation. The pilot started on September 1, 1994 and is believed to be unique in the Ontario Public Service. The purpose of the project is to encourage employees with primary responsibility for dependent family members to participate fully in out-of-town training or special committee meetings beyond their regular job requirements and hours.

All of the staff who participated in the initial pilot felt that reimbursement of dependent care costs helped eliminate barriers facing employees with dependent care responsibilities. Managers surveyed felt that it also helps managers manage more effectively by providing flexibility around training schedules.

Indira Singh, manager of the Employment Equity Office, feels that this pilot project helps ensure that all employees get a chance to participate in extra committee work and consequently gain a wider range of job experience. It's also consistent with the ministry's philosophy of supporting families and balancing work and family.

In order to qualify for reimbursement under this pilot project, the employee needs to meet certain criteria.

- She or he must declare being authorized to attend: a) a special committee meeting that is not part of their regular job requirements or hours or, b) training that is only available outside their



own area and requires time beyond the usual work day.

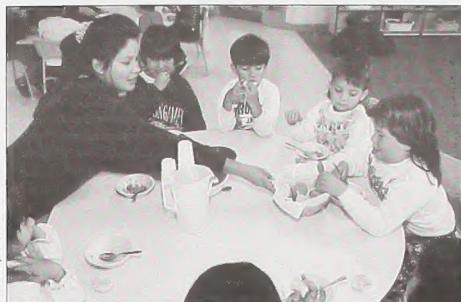
- The employee must be the person who has primary responsibility for the family member (dependent) at the time of the meeting.
- No other adult member of the household (eg, parent, spouse, partner, relative, child over 16) is available.
- No other arrangements can be made that do not involve extra costs for the employee.

Reimbursement claims will be made only for care/supervision services, and not for dependent's accommodation costs.

Dependent care expenses will be submitted to the employee's supervisor for approval subject to the usual expense claim process and accountability. Receipts or invoices will be required, and the maximum reimbursement will be \$50 per overnight stay or 24-hour period.

If you would like more information about reimbursement of dependent care expenses, contact program adviser Rosemary Horvath at the Employment Equity Office at 416-327-4811 (or e-mail HORVATH_R) or contact your local Human Resources manager.

Finding the right child care



Nutritious snacks should be part of your child's care.

Editor's note: This story is part of a series of articles that have been appearing in community newspapers around the province. The articles highlight programs, services or issues related to the ministry's work, and are prepared by the Communications and Marketing Branch. This story (which has been edited for space availability) can be helpful to parents, grandparents and others concerned with the care for young children.

Finding the right kind of child care can be a bit frustrating. Here's a short guide to help make that search a lot easier.

Most fall into three general categories:

- Licensed child care centres are licensed by the government and have specific standards to meet. They can be either non-profit, which means they are run by a board of directors and generally receive some government funding, or they may be commercial businesses that usually receive little or no government money. Non-profit and commercial centres both charge fees.

There are about 128,000 kids in licensed child care in Ontario. Some centres offer both full- and half-day care, while others specialize in nursery school programs, or care for school-aged children outside school hours. A few even offer emergency service, while others operate more than 12 hours a day to accommodate shift workers.

- Regulated home child care is in someone's home and is checked out regularly by community agencies to make sure everything is OK. A regulated child care place can have no more than five children attending. They also charge a fee.

Around 18,000 children are in regulated home settings. The agencies that administer them try to match families to caregivers, and supervise and support the caregivers.

- Then there's the informal system of child care. This is the one where you leave your child with a relative, friend, neighbour or other caregiver, and mutually agree upon a fee. It's the most common of the three kinds of child care in Ontario. While there are no government standards to meet, or requirements that the caregiver has to follow, remember that the person can't look after more than five children: it's illegal.

Child care should provide a quality service, a safe, nurturing environment,

and go out of its way to promote the health and well-being of the children.

If people you know and trust can't recommend a place, look in the Yellow Pages of your telephone book under "Day Care Centres and Nurseries." Make a list of those close to home, or on the way to work.

Prepare a list of questions (number of children and staff, hours of care, activities) and start calling around; jot down the answers they give you. When you've found several places that sound suitable, make an appointment to see each centre supervisor or home child care agency director.

When visiting the site, take a look around. Is it clean? Do the kids seem happy? Are there enough activities? Does it have what you want for any special needs?

If you decide you want to use a licensed child care centre, or regulated home, but you can't afford the fees, ask how to go about getting a subsidized space. You might be able to qualify for one.

You can get a list of child care programs in your town by contacting the local office of MCSS.



Activities in your child's day should be appropriate to the child's age and development.

New Hay Centre opens in Ottawa

After eight years of planning and hard work, a new facility to serve the needs of eastern Ontario youth has opened.

The William E. Hay Centre officially opened April 27 on Hawthorne Road in Ottawa, replacing the former Ottawa Youth Detention Centre (OYDC) on Bronson Place.

The Ottawa Area Office co-hosted the official opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony in conjunction with Eastern Ontario Young Offender Services Inc., a transfer payment agency created from an advisory committee to the Ottawa Area Office. The agency has played a key role in the design of the facility and the development of its program.

The new centre employs about 60 full-time-equivalent (FTE) staff and has a capacity of 24 secure-custody beds, with possible expansion to 32 if needed. The building was under construction for about a year.

The Hay's program emphasizes habilitation, rather than rehabilitation — the acquisition of skills and coping techniques needed to prevent re-offending.

The centre is named in honour of

Cutting the ribbon to officially open the William E. Hay Centre are, from left, Ottawa Area Manager Pierre Lalonde; the president of Eastern Ontario Young Offender Services, Dan Wiseman; and Assistant Deputy Minister of Program Management Sue Herbert. In the background is the interior courtyard of the facility and a living unit.



Restructuring survey completed

The results of a survey conducted last fall among transfer payment agencies (TPAs) about restructuring have been tabulated.

The Corporate Policy Branch undertook the survey in collaboration with the United Way of Ontario. Of the 3,400 TPAs in Ontario, a random sample of 600 were asked to respond. Also surveyed were 50 local planning groups (LPGs).

The agencies and local planning groups were asked what they would need in order to restructure the social service delivery system. Many respondents said there is a need for clarity in ministry expectations of its service providers, and for greater collaboration among funding partners in order to provide better services to clients.

Among supports that the TPAs listed as helpful in their efforts to restructure were: streamlined data reporting requirements; more flexibility in funding and budgeting; and help from MCSS in resolving policy inconsistencies between ministries.

Several items suggested as priorities are already planned or under development within the ministry. It's also hoped that the ministry can work with provincial associations to identify additional "tools" and supports that could be made more widely available.

If you need more information or a copy of the restructuring survey results, called **Supports for Change**, please contact Gabija Petruska, senior policy adviser in Corporate Policy Branch, at 416-325-5402.



TECHNOLOGY TIPS

FROM INFORMATION SYSTEMS BRANCH

E-mail: Some things to consider

Electronic mail is a method to convey information to one or many individuals. It is a store-and-forward technology — meaning that the information is stored for retrieval at a later time by the receiver. This unstructured data transmission allows for multiple addresses, varying sizes of communications and, in the near future, the ability to mix and match data, voice and images.

One advantage of using e-mail over other forms of communications includes the ability to transmit information outside of normal business hours or place of business. Did you know that 80 per cent of business telephone calls never reach the intended recipient? E-mail, on the other hand, rarely goes astray.

You may wish to consider the following "Top 10 Rules for E-mail Etiquette" in your day-to-day e-mail transactions.

1. Always consider face-to-face communications or a phone call. Personal contact will always have advantages.
2. Remember that e-mail is instant, irrevocable (but retrievable), can be forwarded, can remain on permanent record (even when you press "delete") and may be

requested through a Freedom of Information request.

3. Consider your audience: keep the number of people to whom you are sending a message to a minimum.
4. Persons copied on your "cc" list should not be expected to take action.
5. Each message should be topic-specific for easy filing, retrieval and forwarding.
6. Consider e-mail to be like any form of business correspondence.
7. E-mail is not the place to express emotions.
8. Spell check please!
9. Anything over three pages should be sent as an attachment with a brief covering memo.
10. Confidential documents should not be forwarded without the knowledge and prior approval of the originator.

For more information on these and other matters pertaining to ministry e-mail, please contact Gary McCombs, policy analyst with Information Systems Branch, at 416-730-6569.

In the next issue: E-mail and privacy legislation — what it means to you on the job.

In Memoriam: Graham Lethbridge

Our friend and colleague, Graham Lethbridge, died April 13 at his home in Sauble Beach with his wife, Marion and sons, Don and Jay by his side. He was 70.

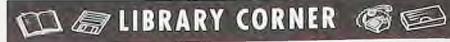
Graham began his career with the ministry in the mid-1970s as the district director for Lindsay, Peterborough and Oshawa. He later became Toronto district director, followed by Central Regional Director (Adults), and Director of Operational Support (Ops Div). He retired from the Owen Sound office as program supervisor in 1990.

His earlier career was with the Anglican Church in the southwest. As Arch Deacon of Perth with St. John's Church in Kitchener, he was instrumental in the establishment of the Region of Waterloo Social Resources Council, the first municipally-sponsored social planning body in the province.



Graham Lethbridge in 1983

Graham also had a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Toronto and a master's degree from Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo. The family has asked that donations in his memory be directed to the University of Social Work at the University of Toronto, or to the Oncology Department of the Grey-Bruce Regional Health Centre in Owen Sound.



LIBRARY CORNER

Focus on on-line databases: SkillsLink and Learning Link

by Dolly Lyn, Library and Career Resources manager

Looking for the right training course?

Information on more than 100,000 courses is now available to you! You can reduce the time, effort and expense of locating the right training resource to meet your needs by contacting the MCSS Library and Career Resources (LCR).

SkillsLink and **Learning Link** are two on-line services which are available to answer your training query. These consist of a series of databases with comprehensive listings of current training resources available in Ontario.

SkillsLink lists seminars, workshops, continuing education and full-time courses and programs, self-instructional materials and other workplace-related training. It is also a useful tool for locating names of consultants and trainers on various topics.

Information includes costs,

addresses and promotional literature on the trainers or companies offering these courses.

Learning Link is devoted to courses, workshops and training resources available only within the Ontario Public Service. A unique feature in it is a bulletin board which is primarily used by redeployment staff to locate employment opportunities within the OPS for both short- and long-term assignments. The LCR is the contact for MCSS managers who have identified such opportunities to be published on this bulletin board.

Both **SkillsLink** and **Learning Link** are useful tools for trainers, redeployment personnel or managers involved in the career planning process for their staff.

For more information about either of these resources, contact Dolly Lyn at LCR: 416-326-6446, or on e-mail LYN_D@MCCS.GOV.ON.CA.

People and Places

Ron Murray is now the co-ordinator of the information unit in Management Support Branch, replacing **Jan Hiemenga**, who retired at the end of March. You may reach Ron at 416-325-5454.

Bill Mocsan has left the Facilities Management Section for a similar position with the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation.

The Port Hope local office has vacated its 38 Walton Street



location and moved to another location. The new address is 138 Hope St., North, Port Hope ON L1A 2P1. Please be sure to update your telephone directory, personal address books, business card files and mailing lists.

Please let us know about staff changes and retirements in your workplace. Contact the editor, Julia Naczynski (see box below for address).

People In Motion next month

"**People In Motion**," Canada's largest exhibition of products, services, technology and transportation for people with disabilities, takes place

during National Access Awareness Week, June 2 and 3, Queen Elizabeth Building, Exhibition Place, Toronto; free admission.

dialogue

Ontario Community and Social Services

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